

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN REPUBLICA CASE

REF: LISBON 3223

SUMMARY: SOCIALIST (PS) JOURNALISTS AND EDITORIAL BOARD OF "REPUBLICA" HOPE TO REOPEN PAPER, SAYING THEY WILL FIGHT ANY CHANGE IN PRESS LAW PREJUDICIAL TO INTERESTS OF FREE PRESS. AFM SPOKESMAN HAS REITERATED POSITION THAT DISPUTE IS ESSENTIALLY LABOR CONFLICT AND THAT PRESS LAW MUST BE REVISED. PS LEADER SOARES FORESEES FORMATION OF ALL-MILITARY GOVERNMENT IF PS FORCED TO LEAVE COALITION, BUT RETURNING PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES SEES CRISIS ENDING. DENOUEMENT, ONCE AGAIN, HAS BEEN POSTPONED. END SUMMARY.

1. PS JOURNALISTS, EDITORS, AND ADMINISTRATORS OF REPUBLICA

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(HAVING PUT OUT THIRD SPECIAL EDITION OF "REPUBLICA CASE" ON JUNE

7) ON JUN 8 EXPRESSED PUBLICLY THEIR HOPE TO REOPEN PAPER SOON, GETTING FIRST ISSUE OUT BY JUNE 12. AMONG OTHER BRAVE THOUGHTS EXPRESSED WAS INTENT TO FIGHT ANY CHANGE IN CURRENT LAW WHICH MIGHT PUT FREEDOM OF PLURALIST PRESS IN QUESTION. WHETHER AS EXERCISE IN SELF DELUSION, FACE-SAVING SUGGESTION FOR COMPROMISE, OR JUST BRAVADO, NEWSPAPER'S PS LOYALISTS ALSO SAID THAT REPUBLICA WILL PRINT (AS LAW DEMANDS) AN EDITORIAL STATUTE DEFINING PAPER AS "SOCIALIST, PLURALIST, AND INDEPENDENT;" EMPLOYEES NOT ABLE TO AGREE WITH STATUTE WOULD THEN HOPEFULLY LEAVE OF OWN ACCORD.

2. AFM SPOKESMAN CAPT. VASCO LOURENCO REPEATED AFM'S DIFFERENT VIEW OF THINGS. CALLING REPUBLICA CRISIS ONCE AGAIN "LABOR DISPUTE," HE INSISTED IT MUST BE TREATED AS SUCH AND RULED OUT DISMISSALS OF (PCP-LINING) EMPLOYEES AGAINST THEIR WILL. AFM CONTINUES TO HOLD TO POSITION THAT REPUBLICA AFFAIRS DEMONSTRATES NEED TO REVISE PRESS LAW TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT REVOLUTION'S CURRENT, MORE ADVANCED STAGE.

3. PS OFFICIALLY HEWS TO LINE THAT REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL'S DECISION TO ENFORCE EXISTING PRESS LAW IS A VACTORY, SINCE IT INCLUDES PROVISION EXCLUDING NON-JOURNALIST EMPLOYEES FROM HAVING VOICE IN SETTING PAPER'S EDITORIAL POLICIES (REFTEL). HOWEVER, IN JUNE 7 INTERVIEW WITH BRAZILIAN NEWSPAPER PS SECRETARY GENERAL MARIO SOARES DID NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY THAT PS WILL STILL BE FORCED TO MAKE GOOD ON ITS THREAT TO LEAVE GOVERNMENT OVER ISSUE. SHOULD THAT HAPPEN, SOARES FORESEES FORMATION OF ALL-MILITARY GOVERNMENT SINCE AFM "WILL NOT WANT TO GOVERN WITH (SUPPORT OF ONLY) 18 PER CENT OF PORTUGUESE PEOPLE, THAT IS THE COMMUNISTS AND THEIR SATELLITES."

4. PRESIDENT COSTA GOMES, RETURNING JUNE 7 FROM FRANCE, REFERRED TO AND REITERATED REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL'S DECISION ON REOPENING OF REPUBLICA. WHILE PRESIDENT'S REMARKS LOOKED TOWARD AN END TO DISPUTE, THEY ALSO HAD OMINOUS RING IN THEIR ASSERTION, MADE BEFORE LEAVING PARIS, THAT IT WAS PS WHICH ORIGINALLY HELD THAT NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL POLICY SHOULD BE SET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF (NON-JOURNALIST) WORKERS PARTICIPATING.

5. COMMENT: LAST CHAPTER IN REPUBLICA AFFAIR HAS YET TO BE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WRITTEN. EVEN IF PAPER REOPENS UNDER CONDITIONS SET DOWN BY REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, EFFORTS TO REVISE PRESS LAW TO PERMIT "WORKER PARTICIPATION" IN FRAMING EDITORIAL POLICY OF PAPERS WILL PROVOKE FURTHER PS-AFM CLASHES. TIMING OF NEXT ROUND WILL DEPEND UPON HOW QUICKLY AFM MOVES TO IMPLEMENT ITS CALL FOR REVISION OF PRESS LAW.
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